

Kathren still in lead after special count of ballots

By John Trumbo, Herald staff writer

Dan Kathren added two dozen votes to his slim lead over Alex Ekstrom as more votes were counted Friday in the race for Benton County District Court judge.

A special count of 1,321 votes that had been held up because of irregularities in the ballots gave Kathren 25,005 votes while Ekstrom's total was 24,974.

The 31-vote difference is a big improvement for Kathren, who at one point last week was leading Ekstrom by just one vote.

The county canvassing board met in special session at the courthouse in Prosser to review the 1,321 ballots before clearing them for the count, said Auditor Brenda Chilton.

The canvassing board, which included county commissioner Jim Beaver, Stuart Holmes of the auditor's office, and Reid Hay of the prosecutor's office, rejected only one ballot that had been found questionable. That ballot lacked the required signature on the ballot envelope.

There are about 190 ballots remaining that are in challenged status because of problems with how voters signed the envelopes.

Chilton said those voters have been told by mail to correct their mistakes by contacting the auditor's office by 5 p.m. Nov. 22.

A few military and overseas ballots will continue to be received and processed through Nov. 23, when the canvassing board will have a final meeting before certifying the election results.

Read more: <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/11/13/1253323/kathren-still-in-lead-after-special.html#ixzz15UB0ynXD>